

***The School Administrator* Author Guidelines**

The School Administrator, a monthly professional magazine, receives many more manuscripts than it can publish. So how can you enhance the chances your manuscript will be among the 30 percent receiving preliminary acceptance for publication? A good starting strategy is to read the author guidelines that follow.

About the magazine

The School Administrator is the official magazine of the American Association of School Administrators. It provides big-picture perspectives, informative features on national trends and new developments, how-to articles, provocative commentaries and collegial discussions on a broad range of topics in education that relate to the role of those working in leadership of public school systems in the United States.

The magazine is delivered to every public school superintendent nationwide. They serve as our primary audience. Our readers are school system leaders around the United States. These leaders typically are school superintendents and their cabinet members who oversee such areas as curriculum and instruction, assessment, technology and school facilities. They are the highest-ranking officials involved in education on the community level.

Each issue is generally organized around a theme (see [Editorial Calendar](#)) with about half of that issue's contents connected to the theme.

What we look for in manuscripts

- **Content Guidelines**

The School Administrator provides timely and informative coverage of school system practices, policies and programs that have widespread appeal. Articles typically emphasize actual experiences – some successful, some not – rather than theory. Articles may be written in the first person and should include insightful reflections that might help other school district administrators.

The School Administrator regularly invites AASA members and non-members who are experts in various fields to contribute articles. We also occasionally hire professional education reporters as free-lancers to write the major feature articles. Here is a list of the different categories of articles that appear in most issues of the magazine along with links to examples in each category:

Features, the main articles in each issue, typically are written on assignment by experts in their field, including school system leaders, professors and consultants. Unsolicited manuscripts are considered for feature slots. Often the lead article is an in-depth examination of a topic relating to that month's editorial theme with several articles that follow clustered under the same thematic umbrella. Most issues of *The School Administrator* are based on themes, such as superintendent-board relations, improving student learning or testing and assessment. Current and upcoming themes can be found on our [editorial calendar](#).

We welcome detailed query letters or first drafts of manuscripts. Feature articles generally run from 1,500 to 3,000 words. Submissions can be accompanied by one or more shorter articles of 250 to 600 words that flesh out a key tangential point in

greater detail. A list of additional resources also serves as a common sidebar. Feature articles are assigned five to six months in advance of the publication date. Feature articles usually run with photographs provided by the author or someone mentioned in the article, but the inclusion of photos with the manuscript has no bearing on the editors' acceptance or rejection.

Focus pieces are short instructive articles that cover aspects of school management, programs, practices or policies. Focus articles, usually written by practitioners and professors of educational leadership, are based on the actual experiences of school administrators and school systems. Topics include community relations, personnel management, school finance, instructional leadership, technology, school law, school safety, school board relations and professional development. Focus articles run about 750 to 850 words. Focus articles run with a photograph (color headshot) of each author. Focus articles are scheduled four months before the publication date.

Board-Savvy Superintendent provides strategies for how superintendents can work effectively with governing boards as a corporate entity as well as with individual board members in an age when the rules of civility seem less in evidence. Articles run about 750 to 850 words depending on whether the author includes a list of 2-4 practical resources for the reader. Board-Savvy articles run with a color headshot of the author. Articles are scheduled four months prior to issue date.

Punchback: Answering the Critics responds to specific criticisms often levied against public schools and/or school administrators with counsel for how school leaders might respond to the complaints. Articles run about 750 to 850 words depending on whether the author includes a list of 2-4 practical resources for the reader. Punchback articles run with a color headshot of the author. Articles are scheduled four months prior to issue date.

Tech Leadership provides practical considerations for the school system leader for ensuring the most effective and efficient use of technology by the individual system leader and/or the school district. These columns answer the question "What do superintendents need to know about or be able to do with technology?" Articles run about 750 to 850 words depending on whether the author includes a list of 2-4 practical resources for the reader. Tech Leadership articles run with a color headshot of the author. Articles are scheduled four months prior to issue date.

Guest Columns present informed opinions on timely issues relevant to local school leaders. We seek provocative points of view, similar to op-ed pieces in a newspaper. We also welcome humorous commentaries. Guest columns run about 850 words. Guest columns are scheduled four months prior to issue date.

Book Reviews are prepared by AASA members. School administrators and professors of educational administration interested in writing brief reviews (250-300 words) of new books on education and leadership should contact the [editor](#) indicating their interest and enclosing a sample of their critical writing. Only current AASA members can be considered for reviewing. Those serving on the book reviewing corps can be expected to receive a list of new titles to consider three times over a year.

If you have recently written a book you would like our magazine to consider reviewing, please have your publisher send a review copy to the editor.

The **Resource Bank** includes short items (50-70 words) related to new research and new informational material available to school leaders. We especially welcome abstracts of recently completed doctoral dissertations relating to some aspect of the superintendency or the management of a school district.

The **People Page** seeks brief news items (50-70 words) about AASA members – promotions, retirements, deaths and significant honors. We welcome color headshots from members who are assuming new positions in school system leadership.

Sidelight, written by The School Administrator staff members, are brief items that spotlight an educational leader's unique hobby or avocation. Sidelight subjects must be members of the American Association of School Administrators. We welcome reader nominations of individuals who have a passion for an outside interest (e.g., bird watching, rock band guitarist, ranch owner or professional chef).

Profiles, written by *The School Administrator* staff members, highlight outstanding educational leaders who are members of the American Association of School Administrators. We welcome reader nominations of individuals to be featured in this section. We seek educational leaders who are distinctive in their style of management, their career path or their contribution to the field.

The **Leadership Lite** page welcomes short humorous anecdotes, quips, quotations and malapropisms relating to school district administration and school board governance. Upon request, names may be withheld in print. Submissions typically are three to four paragraphs.

Letters to the Editor are welcomed. Readers can comment on an article, series of articles or points of view published in our magazine. We prefer letters up to 250 words. We reserve the right to edit letters for clarity, style and space.

- **Writing Style**

Articles accepted for publication are selected on the basis of their relevancy to our readers, originality, readability, timeliness and freshness of viewpoint. We seek articles written in a journalistic style rather than academic format – short paragraphs of three to four sentences in length and clear, concise jargon-free language. Please review previous issues to note how major topics are covered as well as the tone and voice of the articles.

Below are a few **Dos** and **Don'ts** to help strengthen and tighten your writing.

Do:

- Give your article a possible headline as well as suggested subheads (two to three words) when a new topic begins. The editors will make final decisions on these.
- Provide supporting articles (300-750 words), for longer articles, also known as sidebars, that suggest possible action steps by the reader. Sidebars often carry a practical orientation. Also consider including suggested readings, websites and additional resources on your subject.
- Illustrate your points. Readers enjoy examples based on real-life experience. Anecdotes also can be useful in support of major points and make for engaging leads to an article.

- Provide new, cutting-edge information. Give readers information they may not otherwise possess by making them aware of a new problem or showing them a new way of doing things.
- Organize your article so that points are made in sequence as if you were telling them to a friend.
- Maintain a strong focus. The best articles make one or two major points convincingly. You should be able to clearly describe your topic in a sentence or two.

Don't:

- Take too narrow a focus. Make the article broadly applicable to school system leaders nationwide. Articles that deal with a situation that most system leaders face stand the best chance of publication.
- Cite scholarly references inside parentheses or through endnotes. Instead, make attributions to the appropriate source within the narrative (e.g., Sally Smith, in her 1998 book *Back to Basics*, indicated that ...).
- Write long sentences that use passive voice. Instead, write concisely by using active and vivid verbs and limit paragraphs to no more than three sentences.
- Send an article with misspelled words and poor grammar. Be sure to proofread your article and use your computer's spell checker.

Avoiding Promotional Writing

Readers of *The School Administrator* magazine expect articles that are non-promotional in nature. As a result, the magazine does not accept articles that describe the merits of proprietary services or products. We do not publish a new products section.

However, the magazine does consider submissions from product vendors and service providers who wish to share the school-based applications of their products and services for advertorials in the magazine. Advertorials are scheduled five months in advance. Upcoming topics can be found on our [editorial calendar](#).

For more information on the advertorial process, please contact [Liz Griffin](#), managing editor, via e-mail or at 703-875-0753.

The Submission Process

Send your manuscript as a Word document file attachment by e-mail to magazine@aasa.org.

Or, send a hard copy of your manuscript by mail to:
 Editor, *The School Administrator*
 801 North Quincy Street
 Suite 700
 Arlington, VA 22203

Please do not send manuscripts by facsimile. Please do not send both an electronic file and a hard copy.

Preparing your manuscript

1. Include in your e-mail or your cover letter the following information:
 - o proposed title of article.
 - o writer's name.
 - o complete contact information. (address, telephone, facsimile, e-mail)
 - o writer's current professional position. (If previous service in school system administration might be relevant, this could be mentioned too.)
 - o sufficient information about the writer for a standard author identification paragraph.
 - o whether the article has been published elsewhere and whether it has been submitted simultaneously to several publications.
 - o the availability of photos of professional quality relating to your article or of the author. Give us the name and contact information of the person who can provide them).
2. Prepare your manuscript double-spaced, with margins of at least one inch. Please do not single-space your article or crowd the pages.
3. Number all pages.
4. Limit the number of tables, graphs and charts. We do not routinely use them.

After Submission

1. Within seven days of submitting a manuscript electronically, the author should receive an e-mail from the editors acknowledging receipt of the article. (The response time may be slightly longer for paper submissions.)
2. Two to three magazine staff members typically evaluate each manuscript and recommend whether it should be considered for publication. The author generally receives a letter on the status of the article within eight to 10 weeks. If two months pass and the author has not received a final decision, he or she should call the magazine staff at 703-875-0772 or e-mail [Francesca Duffy](#), senior editorial assistant.

Accepted Manuscripts

The editor will notify an author in writing if his or her manuscript has been accepted for publication. The letter typically will spell out the initial changes that will be required in the article and the author will be given a time frame for making these revisions, which sometimes are wholesale in nature. When an article is scheduled for a particular issue, the editors will do a final edit. This version will be returned to the author for review and revisions. The magazine's editors strive to preserve the author's writing style through the editing process, working with authors to make every article as informative and readable as possible. Articles also are edited to fit space requirements.

Authors also will be asked to sign a **publication agreement form** indicating that you do not plan to submit the same article elsewhere before its publication in AASA's magazine and providing for copyright transfer.

No financial compensation is provided to authors. However, authors will be given up to three complimentary copies (upon request and if they are members of AASA) of *The*

School Administrator in which the article appears. Additional copies are available for purchase by downloading our [order form](#) (PDF). Contact senior editorial assistant [Francesca Duffy](#) for high-quality reprints of individual articles in quantities of 100 or more.

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Final Manuscript Checklist

- Review the author guidelines and samples of articles provided by *The School Administrator*.
- Include complete contact information (e-mail, mailing address, phone number), current professional position and proposed title, as well as information about publication elsewhere, photo possibilities and biographical information.
- Prepare manuscript with double-spaced pages, one-inch margins and numbered pages.
- Proofread manuscript for clarity, conciseness and journalistic style.
- Send article as a Word e-mail attachment or hard copy in the mail.